

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 IO-13 ACDA-07 /088 W
-----281408 072365 /53

R 281110Z FEB 77
FM AMEMBASSY SANA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0520
INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANA 0813

E.O. 11652 GDS
TAGS: PFOR, YS, YE
SUBJ: YEMEN/PDRY RELATIONS

1. DURING FEBRUARY 27 TALK, PRESIDENT AL-HAMDI INFORMED ME THAT HIS RECENT MEETING WITH PRESIDENT SALIM RUBAY'I OF PDRY IN QATABA, NORTH YEMEN HAD BEEN HELD PRIMARILY FOR THE PURPOSE OF CONTINUING YEMENI CONTACTS WITH THE MORE MODERATE ELEMENTS IN THE PDRY REGIME. AL-HAMDI DEECRIBED RUBAY'I ALI AS "THXBEST" AMONG THE PDRY LEADERSHIP AND SAID THAT YEMEN'S EFFORTS ARE TO TRY T PROVIDE RUBAY'I ALI WITH MORAL SUPPORT VIS-A-VIS THE OTHERS IN THE REGIME. AL-HAMDI COMMENTD THAT ONE MAJOR DIFFICULTY IN DEALING WITH THE PDRY LEADERS, HOWEVER, IS THAT THEIR WORDS AND THEIR ACTIONS DO NOT ALWAYS CORRESPOND.

2. IN RESPONSE TO MY QUESTION AS TO WHETHE HE WOULD CHARACTERIZE THE PDRY REGIME AS COMMUNIST, AL-HAMDI REPLIED THAT ALL OF ITS ACTIONS POINT IN THAT DIRECTION. HE CONTINUED THAT MOREOVER THE SOVIETS ARE GIVING THE REGIME THEIR FULL SUPPORT AS ARE SUCH SOVIET FRIENDS AS THE CUBANS AND EAST GERMANS. IN
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THE MEANTIME THE COMMUNIST CHINESE ALSO CONTINUE TO CARRY OUT PROJECTS IN THE SOUTH AS A WAY OF COUNTER-BALANCING THE SOVIET INFLUENCE AND PRESNCE BUT IT IS THE SOVIETS WHO ARE CLEARLY PREDOMINANT IN THE SOUTH.

3. I ASKED AL-HAMDI IF HE PLANNED TO BRIEF THE SAUDIS ON HIS RECENT MEETING NOTING THAT IT IS IMPORTANT FOR CLOSE

SAUDI/YEMENI COORDINATION OF POLICIES TOWARDS PDRY. AL-HAMDI REPLIED THAT HE THOUGHT THAT MY SUGGESTION WAS A GOOD IDEA AND THAT HE WOULD BE DISCUSSING PDRY WITH PRINCE FAHD WHOM HE ASSUMED WOULD BE ATTENDING THE UP-COMING CAIRO ARAB SUMMIT IN EARLY MARCH IN THE PLACE OF KING KHALID WHO IS SICK.

4. I ALSO MENTIONED TO AL-HAMDI THAT THERE ARE MANY RUMORS GOING AROUND IN SANA ABOUT THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS MEETING AND THAT SOME PEOPLE ARE EXPRESSING CONCERN THAT YEMEN MIGHT NOW BE MOVING TOO CLOSE TO PDRY WHICH MANY PEOPLE IN SANA CONSIDER TO BE A THREAT. AL-HAMDI REPLIED THAT HIS GOVERNMENT'S BASIC INTERNAL/EXTERNAL POLICIES ARE NOT AFFECTED BY THIS EFFORT ON THE PART OF YEMEN TO KEEP SOME DIALOGUE GOING WITH THE SOUTH IN THE HOPE OF INFLUENCING THE SITUATION THERE. AL-HAMDI NOTED THAT HE IS WELL AWARE OF THE DANGER OF GETTING TOO CLOSE TO THE SOUTH.

5. COMMENT: I THINK WE CAN ACCEPT AL-HAMDI'S EXPLANATION OF WHAT HE IS TRYING TO DO VIS-A-VIS THE SOUTH AT FACE VALUE. THE IMPORTANT THING, HOWEVER, IS TRYING TO GET MORE COORDINATION BETWEEN SAUDI ARABIA AND YEMEN ON THIS ISSUE. BOTH SEEM TO BE PROCEEDING IN THEIR OWN WAY. IN THIS REGARD, EARLIER THAT SAME MORNING, I HAD A DISCUSSION WITH THE SAUDI MILITARY ATTACHE SALIH HUDAYYAN WHO HAS IN EFFECT BEEN ACTING AS THE SAUDI AMBASSADOR IN THE ABSENCE OF HIS CHIEF OF MISSION. I MENTIONED TO THE ATTACHE THAT I PLANNED TO DISCUSS THE QATABA MEETING WITH AL-HAMDI AND WONDERED IF HE HAD HEARD ANYTHING. HE REPLIED IN THE NEGATIVE BUT STATED HE ALSO INTENDED TO RAISE THE SUBJECT. I TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE THE SAME PITCH
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WITH HUDAYYAN ABOUT THE NEED FOR CLOSE COORDINATION. HE STRONGLY AGREED NOTING THAT HITHERTO SAUDI ARABIA HAS BEEN USING EGYPT AS A GO-BETWEEN WITH PDRY BUT THAT EGYPT IS NOW TOO PERIOCCUPIED WITH BOTH INTERNAL DIFFICULTIES AS WELL AS THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION TO BE OF HELP. HE SAID THAT YEMEN AND PARTICULARLY AL-HAMDI OUGHT TO BE USED MORE BY THE KINGDOM IN ORDER TO DO IN SOUTH YEMEN WHAT THE KINGDOM WITH US SUPPORT HAS BEEN ABLE TO DO IN NORTH YEMEN. I AGREE WHOLEHEARTEDLY WITH THIS AND HOPED THAT HE WOULD BE REPORTING HIS VIEWS TO RIYADH. HE SAID HE WOULD.
SCOTES

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 28-Feb-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977SANA00813
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770068-0782
Format: TEL
From: SANA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t1977022/aaaaabys.tel
Line Count: 108
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 10db60c3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 28-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3260199
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: YEMEN/PDRY RELATIONS
TAGS: PFOR, YS, YE, (AL-HAMDI, IBRAHIM)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/10db60c3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009